

So comprehensive had been the growth of the degrees-conferring visionary colleges that reports related under one roof in Washington, D. C., were listed fifty "educational institutions," and that in the city of Washington one group of men had incorporated 200 "colleges" and "universities."

Diploma mill investigations were waged actively in Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Texas.

Although thorough investigation disclosed but two instances where California licenses had been obtained by fraud, yet the odium attached to the prominence of Pacific Medical College credentials bartered by the national diploma mill, stirred the California board to renewed interest in strengthening our laws to cope with the purveyors and users of fraudulent professional credentials. In this fight for decent standards and to punish the offenders, the California board was opposed by astute attorneys, and had the funds of the medical board been limited, the battle would have been lost. Witnesses brought from Missouri and elsewhere testified to the purchase and sale of Pacific Medical College diplomas as well as transcripts showing an alleged course of medical study completed by the purchaser. The medical license of the president and owner of the Pacific Medical College was revoked. After four years consumed in the usual court procedures involved in cases on appeal, the higher court sustained the California board's revocation.

California's experience in attempting to penalize those who sell or attempt to use fraudulent credentials disclosed that our state law was deplorably weak.

Difficulties encountered in endeavoring to punish the diploma mill conspirators in California brought about the introduction by the California Board of Medical Examiners of what is termed the "diploma mill bill" passed by the legislature in 1927, now a law which makes illegal the use or sale of any fraudulent diploma, credentials, etc., in an attempt to secure from any of the licensing boards mentioned a license to practice the healing art. The penalty for violation of this statute is one to three years in the state prison or a fine of from \$1000 to \$3000, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Two individuals have been convicted under this "diploma mill bill," and the publicity given these cases has served as a warning to others.

The effectiveness of a regulatory law such as the "diploma mill bill" depends on the interest of the administrative officer of the Board of Medical Examiners and his intuition born of years of experience in uncovering attempts to secure a medical license by fraud.

CALIFORNIA MEDICAL LEGISLATION

Regarding S. B. 175 (Fellom): The Bill to Permit Corporations to Practice Medicine for Profit

On pages 236-237 of the September 1931 number of *CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE* was printed the California Senate roll call on S. B. 175 (Fellom), which bill would have given corporations the right to practice medicine for profit in California. It was hoped that the information there given would suggest to the officers of county societies that letters of appreciation be sent from their respective county societies and/or members to the state senators who voted against S. B. 175 (Fellom) becoming a law.

The California Medical Association Committee on Public Policy and Legislation, through its chairman, Dr. Junius B. Harris, sent to each of the senators who voted against S. B. 175 (Fellom) the following letter:

My Dear Senator —:

Under separate cover we are sending you a copy of the September issue of *California and Western Medi-*

cine, the official publication of the California Medical Association, an organization of more than five thousand of the registered physicians and surgeons of California.

On page 236 of this issue under the caption "Medical Legislation," you will find some excerpts from the "Senate Daily Journal," giving the roll call on Senate Bill 175, which bill would have given corporations the right to practice medicine for profit.

It has occurred to us that you might be interested in the brief comments there made.

As you were one of the senators who voted against this bill, we wish you to know that we believe members of the county medical association from your own district, as well as members of the medical profession throughout California are deeply appreciative.

Yours very truly,

JUNIUS B. HARRIS, M. D.,

Chairman of the Committee on Public Policy and Legislation.

Among replies received from state senators who were so addressed are letters printed below. It is hoped that all county societies will write to their respective senators who voted against Senate Bill 175 (Fellom). Two of the reply letters follow:

November 3, 1931.

My Dear Doctor:

I received your very pleasant letter of October 31, also copy of the medical legislation, and am glad that my vote on the bill referred to was pleasing to you.

Very truly yours,

RALPH E. SWING.

Friend June:

Thanks very much for the magazine and for your kind favor of October 31.

Those of us in public life get so many brickbats an occasional bouquet is a wonderful help to our spirits. Seriously speaking, I was delighted to be of assistance and will be glad to cooperate with you at any time.

Very truly yours,

J. M. INMAN.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO*

EXCERPTS FROM OUR STATE MEDICAL JOURNAL

Volume IV, No. 12, December 1906.

From some editorial notes:

The Gerino Decision.—In view of the close resemblance of this decision to that handed down by the Supreme Court, already referred to as the case *ex parte Gerino*, it would seem to be not amiss to quote the salient portion of that now celebrated decision.

"It being proper for the legislature to demand some standard of efficiency, as we have seen, we think it equally within its powers to declare that it shall be the same as that required by an association composed of colleges devoted to the work of preparing persons for the profession. Evidently the standard of proficiency in scholarship as a preparation, and the particular studies necessary to secure a fair preparation, must change as the discoveries in natural science open new fields of investigation and suggest or reveal new curative agencies. The legislature cannot successfully prescribe in advance a standard to meet new and changing conditions. The method adopted appears to be sufficiently definite to enable all colleges to reach the required standard when in good faith they desire to do so. . . ."

Other Plans.—Other journals have attacked the American Medical Association, its *Journal* and the Council on Pharmacy; other journals will continue to do so, and in other ways. Be assured that the interests opposing this present movement to try and secure simple honesty in the making and marketing of remedies intended for physicians' use are very

*This column strives to mirror the work and aims of colleagues who bore the brunt of state society work some twenty-five years ago. It is hoped that such presentation will be of interest to both old and recent members.